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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ADANA 0021

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S INITIAL VISIT TO ADANA

REF: ADANA 0017

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Ambassador Edelman on February 10th made his initial visit to Adana. Ambassador met with incumbent Adana Mayor Aytac Durak to discuss both USG foreign policy and the current conditions in Adana. When the Ambassador asked Durak what he considered Adana's most significant problem, Durak responded that it was internal migration. The Mayor noted no problems with the Adana Christian community although there is an ongoing investigation into a recent attack on a church. In response to the discussion on the 2005 Multifiber Agreement expiration, Durak noted that a QIZ including textiles would be beneficial to the area. Ambassador also made a courtesy call to Sabanci Mosque and received mission briefs at Incirlik Air Base, including Iraq support missions. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) 10th Tanker Base Commander Brigadier General Levent Turkmen met the Ambassador and his party at the Incirlik Air Base flight line on February 10. Embassy Ankara sent a diplomatic note to the TGS requesting meetings with Turkmen and 6th Corps Commander Lt General Ayhan Tas but the meetings were not approved. Ambassador departed the flight line with 39th Air Base Group Commander Col William MacLure for a mission briefing.

3. (SBU) Ambassador met with incumbent Adana Mayor Aytac Durak later on February 10 to discuss the current political and economic scene conditions in Adana. Durak opened by noting area interest in the ongoing UN talks in New York regarding Cyprus. When the Ambassador stressed that the US strongly supports a Cyprus solution before the Greek Cypriot EU accession in May, Durak remarked that it was unfortunate that past Cyprus policy had been not been more favorable to the Turkish side. The Mayor noted the importance of a stable Iraq since it was Turkey's southern neighbor and that the southeast Turkish region was watching developments there closely.

4. (SBU) The Mayor is currently up for reelection in a very active campaign, but has yet to declare his political party affiliation (see REFTELS). Durak remained confident that he would win in any case, but he preferred to belong to "the strongest party possible" (Comment: Mayor's advisors assure consulate personnel that Durak will run as an AK Party candidate. AK Party remains silent on Durak's candidacy. End comment). The Mayor expressed concern that once re-elected he would continue to experience difficulty working with the sub-municipalities (Yuregir and Seyhan) on the City Council. Durak went on to explain that, if he belonged to the strongest party, he could direct Seyhan and Yuregir more effectively. He gave the example of gecekondus he had observed near the Consulate (new Consulate now is located in Yuregir municipality). When visiting the Consulate, Durak told PO that he would like to do something about the illegal structures, but since it was Yuregir, he could not control the problem (Comment: Consulate has only requested road, security, and sewage system improvements; it has not asked that Durak or his Yuregir counterpart address the nearby gecekondu. End comment).

5. (SBU) When the Ambassador asked Durak what he considered Adana's most significant problem, Durak responded that it was internal migration. The rich people moved to Istanbul and the poor

people continue to immigrate from southeastern Turkey to Adana, according to the Mayor. Durak noted that this was producing a strain on services in the area because, despite the predominately agricultural nature of the area economy, many of the internal migrants still were unemployed and too illiterate to find other than agricultural jobs.

16. (SBU) In response to the Ambassador's discussion of area plans regarding the January 2005 expiration of the Multifiber Agreement, Durak and his advisors offered that a QIZ including textiles in Yumurtalik would be beneficial to the area. Only one of the Mayor's advisors (an experienced businessman who handles Durak's press affairs) responded with an understanding of the need for Adana textile manufacturers to move up the value chain. The advisor noted that there was a need to manufacture higher quality higher value-added apparel because in the production of bulk cloth and low quality apparel few countries could compete with China.

17. (SBU) When the Ambassador asked the Mayor about the situation in Adana for religious minorities, the Mayor responded that there was a very small community in Adana. Most of the Christians are in Mersin or Iskendurun, he said. Durak did not mention any problems (Note: Recently there was a molotov cocktail thrown at an Adana church, causing only superficial damage to the faade, which is still under investigation. Durak did not appear to be aware of the incident. End note).
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